

**Minutes**  
**King County Rural Forest Commission**  
**October 8, 2003**  
**Preston Community Center**

*Commissioners present:* Jean Bouffard, Dennis Dart, Lee Kahn, Bill Kombol, Fred McCarty, Dave Warren

*Commissioners absent:* Gordon Bradley, Rudy Edwards, Matt Mattson, Doug McClelland, Doug Schindler

*Exofficio members:* Randy Sandin

*Staff:* Kathy Creahan, Kristi McClelland, Susan Monroe, Harry Reinert, Ted Sullivan, John Sweetman, Benj Wadsworth

*Guests:* Julie Keough, Michelle Conner

Doug McClelland called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

Dave Warren recounted the Vashon Forest Stewards field day with Jerry Franklin, Dean Berg and Andy Carey. It was a great day with a lot of good information sharing.

Dennis Dart announced that all of the forestland that International Forestry manages (16,000 acres) was just certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). They also just purchased Resource Mapping and Management, a GIS consulting firm.

Doug commented that at WADNR there have been a lot of good discussions recently about the sustainable harvest levels, certification and carbon sequestration. He suggested that people get involved in the dialog.

### **Minutes Approval**

Motion 1-1003 "To adopt the August 2003 minutes as written."

Moved, seconded and approved.

### **Staff Report**

Benj met with the Snoqualmie Forum to discuss incorporating forestry recommendations in the WRIA 7 salmon recovery plan. He thinks that they are headed in the right direction in terms of focusing on forest conversion rather than forestry practices.

The Programmatic Plan for managing King County-owned forestland is complete and signed.

Jenna Tilt completed a draft of the Sugarloaf Mountain Forest Plan before returning to school. Staff is in the process of editing it. It should be completed by the end of the year.

The Urban Forestry Program hosted the new director of the USFS Urban and Community Forest Program when he visited the Northwest. He seemed impressed with the efforts occurring in this area.

The Friends of Rock Creek are planning a public meeting for December 4. Jean Bouffard and Bill Kombol were volunteered at the August meeting to review the plan on behalf of the RFC. They agreed to do so.

Benj and Dave Warren are talking with Ecotrust in Portland about conducting a workshop on Vashon focused on the development of forestry coops in December. Ecotrust has funding to do several workshops before the end of the year. Benj hopes that some landowners from off-island might be interested in attending.

Benj is working on the site management guidelines for the Maple Ridge Highlands 4-to-1 property. There is a need for forest restoration on the property. It might be appropriate to conduct a field trip.

### **Cedar / Green Forest Conservation Initiative**

Michelle Conner from the Cascade Land Conservancy (CLC) presented a slideshow about the Cedar / Green Forest Conservation Initiative. This initiative is part of a larger effort to conserve the forested foothills in the Puget Sound region.

CLC has been working over the last 3 years to pass legislation for Community Forest Bonds to purchase the Snoqualmie Tree Farm. Legislation recently passed the House committee in a form that should be adequate for conferencing with the bill coming out of the Senate. CLC is hopeful that there will be authorization for up to a \$250 million project in Washington State.

The Skykomish River Forest Legacy closed yesterday on about 10,000 acres. Last year CLC received \$1 million toward property owned by Fruit Growers in the Raging River. For 2005, the applications are for S. Fk Stillagamish in Snohomish County, Cedar/Green, Carbon River in Pierce County and Lake Kapowsin in Pierce County. Hopefully one or two of these will get funded at the national level.

The Cedar Green Initiative involves a Forest Legacy application for Plum Creek land south of the Green River and a community forestry component around Rock Creek. The smaller projects around Rock Creek can be used as a match for Forest Legacy. There will likely have to be some sort of transfer of development rights. The challenge will be to find appropriate receiving sites. There are roughly 250 development rights that will need to be transferred or purchased. One of the challenges will be finding forest land buyers for the community forestry area in the Rock Creek Valley. It could be difficult to make this land viable for forestry. Dennis Dart asked if CLC would be interested in purchasing the land and managing it for timber. They might be.

Doug commented that the RFC has spent a lot of time discussing the need for forest conservation in south King County. Benj asked if there are interested buyers for the forestland if and when the development rights are removed. Doug commented that a map should include the parcels in the area. He also commented that cluster development should be a big part of this, but there is currently no incentive for clustering in King County. Kitsap County is considering allowing a density bonus for clustering. Bill Kombol commented that due to new water regulations, clustering is going to be very difficult. Discussion ensued about who is working on conservation efforts in the “community forest area.” There are groups working on preservation efforts to acquire specific parcels, but there is nobody working on the developing a sustainable small-scale forestry model. Dave Warren asked if you could cluster within the rural area rather than moving credits into the urban area. Benj commented that there may be a problem with traffic concurrency. It is illegal to subdivide in the traffic concurrency “red zone,” and much of the land in the rural area is in the red zone.

Doug asked if the RFC is interested in working on this issue. Michelle commented that if small landowners are going to manage the land in forest, they are going to need a lot of support. Dennis Dart commented that there are people interested in investing in 640 – 1000-acre parcels to practice forestry. Typically they are wealthy individuals who view it as a way of diversifying their investments. Benj commented that from an investment standpoint, there are much cheaper places to buy forested parcels that size. Fred McCarty commented that the infrastructure needs to be in place if such investments are going to be viable. Michelle stated that her major concern is how to make forestry viable for the small landowners north of the Green River in the Rock Creek Valley. She thinks that the RFC could be very helpful by undertaking an effort to address the need for providing infrastructure and making forestry more viable. Kristi commented that it would be appropriate for the state to get involved. There are several departments at WADNR that assist small forest landowners. Benj commented that there is a need to identify who the interested forest landowners and potential investors are in the area. They need to be brought together to discuss options. Dennis commented on the need for regulatory certainty. In Lewis County, they are working on an HCP to address this issue.

Dennis also feels that there is a mixed message being sent regarding preservation as opposed to conservation of working forests.

Doug asked for a set of maps that shows the parcelization in the region and the ownership mix.

Julie Keough commented that she thinks the RFC is off-base. She feels that there is a motivation among the RFC to save the landscape, but that is not a motivation for most of the people living in the South King County area. Also, there is not a good understanding of forestry in the area. If something cannot be accomplished in 3 – 5 years, then we are out of luck. Bill Kombol feels that it is possible to find organizations to manage the land for forestry, but it is not a great investment unless the development value is removed. The answer is money. Jean Bouffard commented that perhaps the answer is to make clustering more appealing. Doug suggested that maybe the TDR program needs to be tweaked to make it work in this area. Julie suggested the need to articulate the goal for the area. Benj commented that the goal is to keep the land relatively unfragmented. Part of the answer is the removal of development rights, but there will still be a need to find owners that want to manage for forestry. The Friends of Rock Creek have a lot of information about the area and could be very helpful.

All agreed to spend some time at the next meeting discussing the issue with maps of the area.

#### **4G Permits and the Uplands Development**

Kristi McClelland reviewed the situation on the Uplands Development. The Uplands is a pilot project that involved moving land out of the FPD for large lot development and setting aside a part of the development to be managed as a working forest tract. International Forestry Consultants (Dennis Dart's company) has been hired by the landowner to set-up timber sales to harvest aging alder and convert it to conifer. Because the property is platted, he has had to apply for a 4G permit from King County DDES. The proposed harvest involves removing the alder and bear-damaged trees. He is running into problems regarding a number of 40% slopes on the property. He feels that timber harvest should not be limited on 40% slopes and that the way that they are measured in the field makes forestry almost impossible. Anywhere there is a 40% slope, there has to be a buffer of 50 ft. This makes it almost impossible to put a road in. Doug commented that the forest management plan was developed without enough comprehensive thought. He suggested that it would make sense to go out on the ground and really evaluate the situation with an open mind. Randy Sandin commented that the goal of the project was good, but the ordinance was not well-written. It was not the intent to preclude logging in the forest tracts. The RFC should support the amendments to the CAO that would relax regulations on steep slopes. Dennis commented that the problem is how the slopes are measured – whether it is over the course of an entire slope or over any particular part of a

slope. It should be measured over the entire slope. If it isn't, more problems result from efforts to avoid the small steep slopes.

### **CUT Assessment Issue**

Ted Sullivan recounted the discussion at the March meeting about proportional assessment of Timberland properties. He introduced John Sweetman and Susan Monroe from the Assessor's Office. Currently, the area excluded for a homesite is assessed at market value rather than as a proportion of the entire parcel, which would result in a lower tax on the entire property. Doug asked what the RFC can do to address the issue. John Sweetman responded that state law would have to be changed, and there likely would not be support for that in other parts of the state that rely on the tax revenue from timberland. Doug concluded that perhaps the RFC should not pursue this issue, as the County is following state law, and change would be difficult. All agreed.

### **Critical Areas Ordinance**

Kathy Creahan provided a briefing on how the CAO is addressing 4G forest practice permits that are under County jurisdiction (those that were platted after 1960 or are in the Urban Area). Forestry staff wants to ensure that there are no additional regulations that are a disincentive to forestry in these cases. Proposal is that King County will follow the state forest practice rules. The CAO includes wording for a "non-conversion 4G permit" to apply in cases where forestry is occurring on a parcel platted after 1960 but where there is no intention to convert. If state forest practice rules allow an alteration, the County will too. Dennis suggested that a landowner should simply have to submit a state forest practice permit to DDES. Kathy commented that the Forestry Program can assist in the preparation of a permit through the technical assistance program. Bill Kombol commented that a County permit is still far more expensive. The problem is not just the standards but the implementation and cost of it. Randy Sandin commented that there are a variety of ways to decrease permit costs.

Doug asked if there is a need for a meeting to reach out to the forestry community. Harry responded that if there is a need, he would be willing to put an informal meeting together.

Harry distributed information about public meetings and outreach. He pointed out that in the allowed alteration table, there are three caveats for forest practices: 1) the property must be enrolled in CUT, 2) the property must have a long term forest management plan, and 3) the property cannot be within a "wildlife habitat conservation area" – breeding sites for 9 species that the Comp Plan requires the County to protect. There is concern that the Forest Practice

Act does not address these species. Kathy suggested that the RFC comment that the wildlife area provision should be omitted. Dave asked if it would be possible to have a plan but not be in CUT. Doug suggested that the forest plan should be the main caveat.

Motion 2-1003: To provide written comment that the main caveat should be a forest management plan.

Doug suggested that rather than a meeting for forest landowners, perhaps there should be a mailing that summarizes the important points effecting forestry.

Doug asked if the discussion should be continued at the November meeting. Kathy commented that there are other aspects of the CAO that have to do with rural land development, and the RFC might be interested in hearing about these as well.

Doug concluded that the next meeting will include discussions of the CAO and the Cedar-Green Initiative in greater detail.

### **Next meeting**

Wednesday, November 12, 9:00 – 12:00, Preston Community Center.

Note - the meeting schedule for the next 6 months is as follows:

November 12

January 14

March 10

May 14

June 11